The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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Rome Wasn't Built in a Day.

THE boy who does a stroke and stops,
Will ne'er a great man be;
'Tis the aggregate of single drops
That makes the sea the sea.

The mountain was not at its birth
A mountain, so to speak;
The little atoms of sand and earth
Have made its peak a peak.

For all at once the morning streams
The gold above the gray,
'Tis a thousand little yellow gleams,
That make the day the day.

Not from the snow-drifts May awakes,
In purples, reds and greens;
Spring's whole bright retinue it takes
To make her queen of queens.

Upon the orchard rain must fall,
And seek from branch to root,
And blossom bloom and fall withal,
Before the fruit is fruit.

The farmer needs must sow and till
And wait the wheaten bread,
Then cradle, thresh, and go to mill,
Before the bread is bread.

Swift heels may get the early shout,
But, spite of all the din,
It is the patient holding out
That makes the winner win.

Make this your motto, then, at start —
'Twill help to smooth the way,
And steady up both hand and heart —
"Rome wasn't built in a day!"

Alice Cary.

Words of Truth.

Thy words had such a melting flow,
And spoke of truth so sweetly well,
They dropped like heaven's serenest snow,
And all was brightness where they fell!

Moore.

For the Myrtle.

The Peasant Girl and the Fairy.

IN the days of the fairies, and that was many years ago, a poor girl sat spinning by the light of a cheerful wood fire. Very lovely she looked in the soft firelight as she turned the wheel with her little foot, for she was very beautiful. Her golden curls fell over her shoulders as careless and free as the brook that came down the hillside, and her eyes were as blue as the violets in spring-time. Yet with all these blessings she was far from being happy.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, pettishly, as she broke her thread. "if I were only rich I could live without work, and I could wear gay ribbons and fine clothes, instead of a woolen gown and these wooden shoes. I wouldn't care if I were covered with moles," she added, remembering the saying, that there would be a bag of gold for every mole.

Just then she looked up, and a beautiful little creature stood before her. You will know that it was a fairy. Whether she had been concealed under a stone in the hearth, or had come through a chink in the window, no one could tell; it was enough that she was there.

The sight of so much beauty embarrassed the girl, but she had the presence of mind to rise and make a low courtesy, though she did not say a word.

"How can I serve you, sweet lady?" the fairy said, in a voice that made the little shepherdess

think of the tinkling of the bells of her flock, only it was a thousand times sweeter.

But the girl in her confusion had forgotten her wish, and only faltered, "I have all I need."

"But you want to be rich," said the same silvery voice, and again the girl's thoughts wandered to the green fields where her sheep fed. "I am of another race of beings. I heard your wish, and have come to do your bidding. I will give you three bags of gold, if you will wear three moles."

"I am sure I would not mind the moles," the little rustic said quickly, her eyes sparkling, for she had never seen herself except in the polished surface of a pewter plate, forgetting, as many people do, that her hastily acquired riches would leave a stain that could not be washed off.

The fairy laid the three bags of gold on the hearth, and went as she came. The girl rubbed her eyes, for she thought she had been asleep, and had only had a pleasant dream; but there lay the three bags of gold at her feet; it was a reality.

She raked the coals open, and heaped them with fagots, and sat down to look into the fire, and lay plans for the future. In her ecstacy she did not notice that there was a mole on each snowy arm, and a third one on her cheek.

"Three bags of gold," she said to herself, slowly, looking at her treasures. "I will have a palace built with precious stones. I will wear colors that will be more beautiful than the clouds at sunset, and jewels that will sparkle like the stars on a winter night."

Again the fairy was at her side.

"I will show you such a palace," she said.

After a minute's walk over the hard crispy snow — the bewildered girl could never remember how she went — she suddenly found herself in a more beautiful palace than she had ever seen, even in her dreams.

"I will make you its mistress," the fairy said, "and you shall have silks, laces, and jewels, for the three bags of gold."

"I shall never want anything else," the delighted maiden said, as she returned the gold,

Then all the grand and wealthy hastened to pay her a visit. They praised her cake and wine, and admired her furniture and jewels, but they were so rude as to say within hearing, "How horrid she looks! I would rather be poor all my life than to have those ugly looking moles." And what made it still worse, she constantly saw herself reflected in some bright surface, often seeing several images instead of one.

In her perplexity she consulted a celebrated magician. Singular as it may seem, the cunning fellow asked a bag of gold for removing each mole.

"Alas!" she cried, "if I had but a single bag of gold, I would cure the mole on my cheek. I would not care for the rest."

"I will give you a bag of gold for your jewels," said a sweet voice, for it was the fairy's.

"I am sure I would rather wear homespun, than be despised," the heart-sick girl thought, as she took the gold in exchange for the jewels. "Beside," she reasoned, "if I kept them, a thief might come in the night and take them.

But the beautiful palace without its splendidly dressed mistress was like a casket without its jewels, and the people laughed more openly than before. "She looks as though she had carried a basket on her head," they said. "Who is she?" so nearly were they like the people of the present day.

It was more than she could bear, and again, in the solitude of her chamber, she looked into the fire as of old, and built another castle for herself.

"I want to be a hermitess," she thought, "and live in a cottage by the sea. I am sure the mermaids would admire me."

"Your wish is granted," said the fairy, as she tripped lightly into the room.

The girl had not time for a parting look, ere the spacious parlor was changed into a charming little cottage, which commanded a fine view of the sea.

"What a delightful retreat;" she exclaimed, "and how snug and comfortable it is! I shall have enough for myself and something to spare, if a beggar should chance to pass this way.

Now there was but one thing to annoy her, and like many others that have but one trouble, she thought of it from morning till night, the moles on her arms showed plainly through the thin muslin that covered them. She resolved to cut them off; but alas! it was a fatal step, for it was no sooner done than they began to grow rapidly, covering her arms in a short time. Her cup of sorrow was full.

"Oh why!" she cried, in the depth of her despair, "oh, why have I lived to be so miserable! It would have been better for me if I had not been born."

This time the fairy came as an angel in disguise. She laid her tiny hand on the maiden's head, for it was bowed low in prayer, and said "Have you forgotten the green fields, where your sheep fed? and the sunny slopes where their lambkins sported? and do you not remember you used to weave garlands of the earliest spring flowers, that suited your brow better than a crown?"

"Oh, take me back," said the world-weary girl, stretching out her hands imploringly.

Her prayer was granted. For she was again in the humble cottage of her youth; with the wheel by her side like a faithful friend that has been tried and found true. She patiently mended the broken thread, listened to the music of the wheel as to a half-forgotten lullaby, while she drew the thread from the distaff; and never again complained of the fate that made her a peasant instead of a princess.

S. T. McCraken.

The Mother Cat.

Last fall, while an old gentleman was at work in his garden, his cat came to him and cried and appeared to be in great distress. The old gentleman spoke kindly to her, and she went away, but soon returned, and still cried, and going a little way, would come back to him, and mew as if she wanted him to follow her. It was so evident this was what she wanted, that the old man left his work and followed her. She took him to the front of the house, and there, in the morning glories that were trained over the front door, was her little kitten hung by the neck, crying piteously, and unable to extricate herself. The mother showed great joy when she saw the kitten liberated.

A MISSIONARY in the West Indies, having called on the colored people for a little help in spreading the gospel, a negro with a wooden leg came forward, and, pulling from one pocket a parcel of silver, said, "That's for me, massa;" and another parcel from another pocket, "that's for my wife, massa;" and another still, (in all thirteen dollars), "that's for my child, massa." When asked by the missionary if he was not giving too much, he said, "God's work must be done, massa, and I may be dead. As I have no promise of to-morrow, I must do my full duty to-day."

Christ and the Little Ones.

"The Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah the mother one day,
"He is healing the people who throng him
With a touch of his finger, they say.

"And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel and Samuel and John,
I shall carry the baby Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled:
"Now who but a doting mother
Would think of a thing so wild?

"If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;
Or had the taint of the leper
Like many in Israel—"

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan,
I feel such a burden of care,—
If I carry it to the Master
Perhaps I shall leave it there.

"If he lay his hand on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know,
For a blessing forever and ever
Will follow them as they go."

So, over the hills to Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep on her bosom,
And Rachel her brothers between;

'Mong the people who hung on his teaching,
Or waited his touch and his word,
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"Now why shouldst thou hinder the Master,"
Said Peter, "with children like these?
Seest not how from morning till evening
He teacheth and healeth disease?"

Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children,
Permit them to come unto me!"
And he took in his arms little Esther,
And Rachel he set on his knee;

And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As he laid his hand on the brothers,
And blessed them with tenderest love;

As he said of the babes in his bosom,
"Of such are the kingdom of heaven"—
And strength for all duty and trial,
That hour to her spirit were given.

Little Pilgrim.

EVIL thoughts are worse enemies than lions and tigers, for we can get out of the way of wild beasts; but bad thoughts win their day everywhere. Keep your heads and hearts full of good thoughts, that bad thoughts may not find room.

For the Myrtle

Visiting the Poor.

BLESSINGS upon the gentle girl
Who loves the humble poor,
And carries sunshine as she goes
To every cottage door.

Who seeks by loving deed and word
To lighten care and pain,
And bring the heavy-hearted ones
To peace and joy again.

E. M. B.

Nursery Song.

ON Monday I wash my dollies' clothes;
On Tuesday smoothly press them;
On Wednesday mend their little hose;
On Thursday neatly dress them.

On Friday I play they're taken ill;
On Saturday, something or other;
But when Sunday comes I say, "lie still,
I am going to church with mother."

Wood's Household Magazine.

For the Myrtle.

The Obliging Boy.

"OH MOTHER, will you not tell Jimmy and I a story to-night? You promised us one each evening when we had been good, and I am sure we have both been good boys to-day."

"Yes, George, I think you have both earned your story to-night. Wait until I get my sewing, and you can come and sit by me here in the corner by the fire, and we will have the story before it is time for you to go to bed."

The boys were not long in getting their places in the corner, and Mrs. Wing said,

"Well, what shall the story be?"

"Oh, about bears," said Jimmy, "you know I always like to hear about bears."

"Yes, I know you do, my child," his mother replied. "But it is not always best for you to hear about bears."

"Why not, mother? I am sure there are always bears enough to be told about, so you can never get them all told up."

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Wing, laughing. "There are plenty of bears. I didn't say there was any trouble about my telling the story. But I do not like to have my little boy always excited over stories. It is better at this time of day to tell quiet stories, that will not set your eyes so wide open that you cannot sleep."

"Yes, mother, I would rather you wouldn't tell bear stories at night," said George, "for Jimmy dreams after those stories, and kicks about so that I cannot sleep."

"Well then, let us begin again," said Mrs. Wing. "What shall the story be? We will let George choose this time."

"I would like to have you tell some story about your Western life," said George.

"A true tale?"

"Oh yes," both the boys replied in a breath.

"Very well. Then we will have a story about the obliging boy."

"Was he a big boy or a little boy?" said Jimmy.

"Neither very large nor very small," Mrs. Wing replied.

"Well, how old was he?" said Jimmy. "I always like to know just how old boys were when I hear about them, and how tall they were, and what was the color of their hair and eyes, and where they lived, and who their father and mother were."

"Well, well, my child," Mrs. Wing interrupted, "I cannot tell you everything about this boy in one evening. You must be contented with the one story with which I began."

"Can't you tell us what his name was!"

"No, my child, I cannot tell you his name, for I do not know it myself."

"That's strange," said Jimmy. "You can tell about a boy, and you do not even know what his name was."

"Oh mother," said George, "I wish you would not allow Jimmy to interrupt you so. We shall never get at the story."

"Well, I wont any more. I will keep very still now until mother is done," said Jimmy.

"Very well," said Mrs. Wing, "now I think we shall get on better. Some years ago when we were both young, your father and I went to live in Westgate, a village in the then far West."

"How many years?"

"There it is again," said George. "We shall never get through that story."

"I forgot," says Jimmy. "I certainly wont speak again."

"We shall see," said Mrs. Wing. "Now I must begin again. Some years ago, when I went with your father to live in the West, our house was very near to a schoolhouse, and I watched the sports of the children day by day with great interest. Among the many was one boy who was particularly bright and active in all the games at which the children played. He could run faster, and jump higher than any other boy who joined in the games. He had a clear ringing voice, and I always knew it when I heard his merry shout.

"This boy had a particularly accommodating disposition. I often noticed how willingly he obliged his companions, and enjoyed seeing him perform these acts of kindness. But there is such a thing as overdoing in this obliging spirit, and this boy came one night to this point of excess.

"It was a bitter cold winter night, and I was snugly tucked into my warm bed, and just dropping off to sleep, when the door-bell rang. This was not a welcome sound to me. Two long halls and two staircases separated me from the front door. Your father was very tired, for he had attended three funerals that day, and I at once took upon myself the duty of answering the bell, supposing that I should, of course, find a message from some one very sick, or in urgent distress. Down the long staircases I ran, my teeth chattering with the cold, and threw the door open, to let in at the same moment, a fierce north wind, and my little friend the active boy. In his hand he held a book, and without waiting for me to ask his errand, he said,

"'Is this your book?'

"What is it? Where did you get it?' said I, asking two questions in one breath, so surprised was I by such an errand at such a time.

"The boy answered bnt one of my queries.

"'I found it on the street.'

"'But what sent you here with it?' said I. 'Has it my name in it?'

"'No ma'am,' the boy replied. 'There is no name in it, but *I thought it looked like a minister's book*, and I would come and see if it was yours.'

"'The book is not mine, thank you,' said I, and I made all haste in getting the half frozen boy into the street again, and creeping, chilled and vexed, up stairs to my own bed.

"I like to be obliged, and I like having my property returned when I have lost it. But I must confess I would rather have these obligations in the day time than in the depth of a winter's night. And now my little boys must run away to bed and I will see that no one wakes them before morning to restore lost property."

"Oh, that is a good story," says Jimmy. "Will you tell us another to-morrow night?"

"We shall see when to-morrow night comes," said Mrs. Wing. *E. M. B.*

Keep Your Promise.

A boy borrowed a tool from a carpenter, promising to return it at night. Before evening he was sent away on an errand, and did not return until late. Before he went, he was told that his brother should see the article returned.

After he had come home and gone to bed, he inquired, and found that the tool had not been sent to the owner. He was much distressed to think his promise had not been kept, but was persuaded to go to sleep, and rise early, and carry it home the next morning.

By daylight he was up, but nowhere was the tool to be found. After a long and fruitless search, he set off for his neighbor's in great distress, to acknowledge his fault. But how great was his surprise to find the tool on his neighbor's door-stone! And then it appeared from the print of his little bare feet in the mud, that the lad had got up in his sleep and carried the tool home, and gone to bed again, without knowing it.

Of course a boy who was prompt in his sleep was prompt when awake. He lived respected, had the confidence of his neighbors, and was placed in many offices of trnst and profit.

If all the grown folks felt as this boy did, there would be a good many tracks of bare feet found some of these bright mornings; and what piles of tools and books would be found lying at their owner's doors! — *Phren. Journal.*

If there is a past in which men have done ill, let them have hope, for there is a future in which they may do well.

Gather your grain while it is ripe.

Our Sunday Schools.

We have tidings of Christmas Celebrations by the Sunday Schools in Methuen, Canton, Jamaica Plain, Beverly, Melrose, Essex, Charlestown, East Boston, Franklin, Newtonville, Quincy, Lawrence, and Peabody; in Nashua, N. H., Springfield and Woodstock, Vt., and we are well prepared to believe that scores of other schools enjoyed as much as those, whose record has not been brought to the light.

MASSACHUSETTS.

— We heard of a Sunday School in one of our neighboring cities which held their Christmas Festival in this way. Each child belonging to the school was requested to invite some poor child and bring it to the Festival. These poor children were considered the guests of the school. They were treated to a plenteous feast, after which each one was given a present. No finer celebration of the Christmas than this could have been made. We wish it had been a Universalist school whose good deeds we thus chronicle. It was a Universalist idea.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

— The Universalist Sunday School at Weare Centre, N. H., observed Christmas this year with the usual trees. The church was finely trimmed with wreaths, mottoes and emblems, tastefully wrought from evergreen, and the trees, which were bountifully laden with gifts and brilliantly illuminated with wax tapers, were very beautiful to look upon. There were readings, recitations, and an original piece, arranged by Mrs. Loretta Foster, the Superintendent, which recently appeared in the MYRTLE, all of which were entirely satisfactory to those present. There was also fine singing by a quartette, and one song by Miss Hattie M. Chase, excellently rendered, as well as pieces by the school. Altogether it was a delightful occasion.

MAINE.

— The school at Augusta recently held what they called "The Children's Party." It was a success.

OHIO.

— A Sunday School concert of a very interesting character was given in the Plum Street Church, Cincinnati, recently. This is the first entertainment of the kind held in this church, and no doubt it will be followed by others during the winter.

MARYLAND.

— The Sunday School in Baltimore is finely progressing in Christian culture as well in numbers, and the pastor, who is the superintendent, is very much loved and respected by the school.

A Pioneer Sunday School.

From a Sunday School missionary's note-book: "Met this Sunday morning a company with dogs and guns starting out for a hunt. Invited the party to go with me, telling them I wished to organize a Sunday School. They escorted me to the schoolhouse, left guns and dogs outside, went in with others, were interested in the picture papers and books, when the leader finally said to the rest, 'Wal, boys, I reckon we'd better jine the meeting. You see this aint the right day to hunt, nohow, and I believe he may take my name.'" — *Christian Union.*

Little Things.

A RECITATION FOR A SUNDAY SCHOOL CONCERT.

[Let seventeen of the youngest scholars arrange in a semi-circle on the platform — seven on the right, and seven on the left of the three largest of these, who should be about ten.]

1. A spider is a little thing,
   But once a spider saved a king.
2. The little bees are wiser far
   Than buffaloes and lions are.
3. Little men may do much harm,
   Little girls may learn to charm.
4. Little boys may shame their sires,
   And little sparks become great fires.
5. A little pen may write a word
   By which a nation may be stirred.
6. A little money, wisely spent,
   A world of sorrow may prevent.
7. A little counsel, rightly given,
   May lift a sinful soul to heaven.
11. Little losses, day by day,
    Would waste a miser's wealth away.
12. A little needle in the eye
    May cause an elephant to die.
13. A little fault if left to grow,
    An emperor may overthrow.
14. A little word, but spoke in jest,
    May rob your neighbor of his rest.
15. A little selfishness and pride,
    The kindest household may divide.
16. Little vices many times
    Result in felonies and crimes.
17. And little virtues in the sum
    Great excellencies do become.
8. 'Tis little acts of good or ill,
   That make our vast account;
   No *one*, though great, does *all* God's will;
   Small drops the caves of ocean fill;
   And sands compose the mount.
9. And our great Father who's in Heaven,
   And doth all creatures view,
   To every little child has given
   Some needful work to do.
10. Kind deeds towards those with whom you live,
    Kind words and actions right,
    Shall 'mid the world's worst darkness, give
    A little precious light!

[8, 9, and 10, together.]

Then let each child its influence give,
O Lord, to truth and thee;
So shall its power by all be felt,
However small it be.

[Let the school sing some appropriate piece before the children take their seats.] *Banner.*

— IT is a fact that God's care is more evidenced in some instances of it than in others, to the dim and often bewildered vision of humanity. Upon such instances men seize and call them providences. It is well that they can, but it would be gloriously better if they could believe that the whole matter is one great providence. — *George MacDonald.*

Doing for Souls.

COLOSSIANS iii. 17.

To-day, dear children, we are to give you the third lesson in doing. We have talked with you of what you are to do for your bodies, what for your minds, and to-day we have something to say of the soul or spirit.

This spirit life within you, is the real life. It is to be forever. Everything that you see with your mortal eyes will pass away Your bodies will soon crumble to dust. The earth and the sea and the skies will all pass away, but when they are all gone the soul that is living in your body to-day will be living still.

Do you not see, then, that we are come to the most important part of these lessons on doing, when we are to talk with you of doing for your spirit life? If you were making a dress that you knew you should wear but one day, you would not put as many stitches in it as you would put into a garment which was to last ten or twenty years.

It would not take you as long to pitch a tent in which you were to tarry a few weeks in the summer, as to build a house wherein you were to live your full three score years and ten.

So of this body and soul-building. You are to take all due care for proper bodily life, but infinitely more for complete and beautiful soul life.

How are you to do this? By improving every opportunity for growth of the spirit, Souls grow as well as bodies. We tell about a certain man being a large souled man, or another being mean spirited. What do we mean? The one man whom we have called large souled is generous and kind, given to good works, always seeking for some opportunity to bless his fellowmen. The other, who is mean spirited, is all absorbed with thoughts of self. He does not try to be a blessing in the world. He is unjust and oppressive to all those with whom he has to deal.

Now both these men have had much to do with the making of themselves. They have come to the la ge and the small measure in which we find them, by their own endeavor. You, dear children, when you are forty years old, will be much the kind of man or woman which you make of yourself. Now is your time to begin the proper kind of training: to sow the seeds of usefulness' to start your tree of life in the direction that you wish it to grow.

The first and best help to a good soul-growth is found in prayer. Ask God to help you. He is the source of all good. Go to Him frequently, and ask that you may be strengthened and helped. Very little children can pray, for true prayer is simply asking God in few and honest words for the things which you need most. He does not require very learned words, or that they should be put together in very elegant sentences. All that He wishes is that you shall open your hearts in sincerity, and let Him come in and bless you.

The next best help to spirit growth is in the Bible. Read it carefully and find there what God has told other men to tell to you. Find the record of Christ's life, and read it till you are as familiar with it as you are with your mother's face. Know just what Jesus did at every point of his career. How he endured temptation. How he bore trial. How he forgave enemies. How he healed the sick. How he pitied the sorrowing. How he blessed every one that came near him. Learn of him, and you will grow in beauty like the lilies; your life will be one long sweet psalm and there will be joy in heaven as the angels listen to its music.

One more means of growth you will get from the people about you. Seek the best companionship. Listen to the words of the highest and holiest persons within your reach. How few people make a point of doing this. I well remember the surprise with which the statement was received that a family in Edinborough went each week, by the Saturday night express, to London, that they might listen on the Sunday to the words of a celebrated preacher.

When this surprise was expressed to the father of this family, he replied, "No one is surprised at the thousands of business men who go to London to get commodities necessary for bodily life. Is it therefore matter for wonder that one family should go thither for that which pertaineth to the spirit?"

Be ye also wise in seeking for the true and lasting. Strive to grow up into the likeness of our common Master, and make each hour of your life tell upon your future perfecting.

Letter Puzzle

Two of H and two of T,
Two of S and two of E,
One of F and one of K,
Four of L and four of A,
Four of N and three of Y,
Two of M and six of I,
One of O and one of D,
Then add W and G;—
Place these letters one by one,
Use them all and leave out none;
And if each you rightly take,
'Twill a Bible promise make.

Charade.

My first is equality, my second is inferiority, and my whole is superiority.

Answer to Enigma No. 3.

JAN. 16. Blueing; Table; Sour; Rye; Vesta; Hyena; Hotel. "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

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